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# THE CLASSICAL JOURNAL

VOLUME XII

JANUARY 1917

NUMBER 4

## Editorial

### GOOD WINE NEEDS NO BUSH

We gladly give editorial space to the following article on "Extension Work in Latin" by Mr. Robert E. Cavanaugh of Salem, Indiana. The paper was read and discussed at the Classical Section of the Indiana State Teachers' Association in October last, and speaks clearly and forcibly for itself upon the various points presented.

The present demand for the "vocational subjects" in our public schools is a matter of much concern to many of our teachers of Latin. This demand is a legitimate one, and, when the problem is more clearly worked out, the place of Latin as one of the valued subjects for study in our secondary schools will remain as secure as it ever was in the past. *The great need today is better teaching. We must have teachers who know their subject and believe in it. If such teachers are available, Latin will need no defense.*

A few years ago any man who could use a handsaw could get a job as a teacher of manual training. School administrators were anxious to introduce courses in this subject along with agriculture and domestic science, in order that their schools might be listed as "progressive." Such procedure necessarily resulted in slipshod work that failed to give any training of real value. The demand now is for trained teachers in these subjects. They must "saw to the line" with precision and intelligence. They must not only know their subjects, but their interests must extend beyond the limits of the material with which they directly deal. We cannot afford to demand less of Latin teachers. They must "saw wood" in their subject, and they must be in the front rank as scholars with the true professional spirit.

We need a better method of reaching the more isolated teachers of Latin while in the service. They should have the advantage of using the latest material brought out for use in the classroom, and they should receive the benefit of all the encouragement that is available for the teachers in the more favored communities. The classical sections of our various state teachers' associations are always well attended and the programs are usually good. Too often, however, we attend such meetings, listen attentively, approve the suggestions made, and then return to the old rut without any real effort to profit by what we have learned. Some classical sections of the state teachers' associations of the Middle West have appointed committees to represent them in an effort to bring about co-operation between the public schools, colleges, and universities of their respective states. Such co-operation can, without doubt, bring about improvement in the teaching of Latin. Among the ways in which the teacher can thus be aided are the following: (1) by encouraging more mutually helpful relations with the *Classical Journal*; (2) by co-operation with local Latin clubs; (3) by stimulating the use of lectures, lecture material, lantern slides, package libraries, and other helpful aids to the teacher in the service; (4) by distributing information in regard to experimental work done by Latin teachers.

The *Classical Journal* should be taken and read by more teachers. The paper itself could be improved if the teachers were provided with an agency through which they might register some constructive criticisms. Is it not true that this paper prints too many long articles and neglects the real problems of teaching? If so, the teachers are to blame. Every institution depends upon the opinions of its constituency for its successful existence. The opinion of one isolated person is worth little, but the concerted action of many acting through a committee whose business it is to serve the teachers of a state may be mutually helpful.

City, town, and other local clubs composed of Latin teachers can accomplish much in fostering the proper professional spirit and they can also stimulate a feeling favorable to Latin as a subject for study. It is evidently true that only a small percentage of Latin teachers are profiting from such organized work. In many communities such clubs are carrying on some interesting and profitable study, but the good work should be extended on a broader scale.

We must look to our normal schools, colleges, and universities for leadership in forwarding extension work through lantern slides, lecture material, package libraries, correspondence courses, and other such agencies. Much good work has already been done along this line in some quarters, but the movement is only in its infancy. The classical sections of our various state teachers' associations through organized effort should make such material much more accessible to the rank and file. A wealth of material is being prepared by the Latin departments of all the best

higher institutions and, thanks to the generosity of the leaders in the work, most of it is available for the general good. Our organized efforts should be devoted to bringing this aid to the teachers who need it most.

Latin teachers may mutually help one another by giving publicity to their methods and experiments that have been successful. A study of the comparative scholastic achievements of students electing Latin with those who choose some other subject is always illuminating and very generally encouraging to Latin teachers. Our success with a good Latin play would, if passed on, be an encouragement to others. The result of an experiment in reading some text other than Caesar, Cicero, and Virgil in high school would be welcomed by teachers who feel the need of a change in the work of their classrooms. The material of this kind that has appeared in our various educational journals has been valuable, and it is the duty of our teachers' organizations to render assistance to the teachers who may be able to work out suggestions that will be welcomed by their fellow-workers.

We do not need to decry the new subjects that are finding a place in the courses of study that are being adopted in our best school systems. They have a legitimate place in our scheme of education. We are spending too much time in the needless defense of Latin as a fundamental in education. When Francis Bacon wrote, "For they [subjects] teach not their use," he stated the truth, and it is doubtful whether argument along this line is really effective. *The thing we need is better teaching of the subject.* If we can find thoroughly interested teachers who are prepared in the fullest extent of the word for their responsible work, the "knockers" will be left without an issue on which to wage their campaign. Extension work of various kinds should be utilized in improving our teaching service.

Upon some of the points raised by Mr. Cavanaugh we wish to make further comment. And first, Amen! to the suggestions (1) that more mutually helpful relations should be cultivated between classical teachers and the *Classical Journal*, (2) that the *Journal* should be taken and read by more teachers, and (3) that its published material should meet more exactly the needs of its readers.

As to the first two points, surely there is room for progress when only some twenty-five hundred out of many times that number of teachers of the classics appreciate and use the help afforded by the *Journal*, and support it by their own active help and encouragement. The vogue of the *Journal* can undoubtedly be increased by increased activity among our state vice-presidents, for in every

state, however well canvassed already, there are a large number who have not yet been brought to an interest in the Classical Association and its journal. But more effective than all activities of vice-presidents would be the enthusiastic recommendation, in season and out, of both association and *Journal* by those teachers who have already proved the value of these for their own needs. Why not double our membership? This would be easily and quickly done if each present member thought enough of his own privileges to induce some other teacher of the classics to share these with him.

As to the third point raised by Mr. Cavanaugh, its justice must be frankly acknowledged. The *Journal* is not ideally fitted to the individual needs of its many classes of readers. This is readily seen to be due to the fact that there *are* many classes of readers. No one article would appeal with equal force to all these classes, for while some would like the material offered to be preponderantly of a practical and pedagogical character, others would want this to be of decidedly an opposite sort. The only way to meet all desires would obviously be to have two or even three journals. But, aside from the obvious practical difficulties involved in this plan, it seems to us that it would be disastrous to the best interests of all our teachers. For no grade of teachers can afford to be indifferent to the problems and interests of other grades in the same subject. Progress lies in the line of unanimity of interests. Let there be a common journal for all grades, and let all read all from cover to cover.

But the editors of the *Journal* have aimed, so far as available material would allow, to give something in each number of especial interest and value to each class of its readers—something of practical help in teaching, something of a literary value in connection with Greek and Latin authors of more general interest, something of the general educational problems and discussions pertinent to our field, something also of a more technical nature, which our recently enlarged volume naturally justifies.

But after all, in so far as Mr. Cavanaugh's third point remains unanswered, the *Journal* is sincerely anxious to find the answer. How can it be of greater value to its readers, and more completely meet their needs? Teachers themselves, individual teachers all

over the country, must furnish the answer to this question. Will they? Will they take the trouble to write to the *Journal* telling what in particular they have found helpful and what in particular they have missed? It occurs to us that for a journal in its twelfth volume we have had surprisingly little contact with the great rank and file of our readers, have heard surprisingly little which would enable us to know, except as silence gives consent, whether in truth the *Journal* was the organ of its association. We shall be glad to give space to all such constructive suggestions as those of Mr. Cavanaugh's, and feel sure that a general voicing of opinion on these matters of our common interest would result in a marked improvement in conditions.

But the point in Mr. Cavanaugh's paper upon which we wish to place especial emphasis is that which he himself emphasizes again and again—*that good teaching of a subject is the best defense of that subject*. Never was truer statement made. In the midst of our elaborate and numerous arguments in defense of the classics, which, as Professor Nutting is pointing out, are too often presented with such varying emphasis as to give the impression to the outsider that we cannot agree as to our own defenses, we do well to see clearly and to remember that no subject, of whatever value, if taught from a background of a lack of knowledge, skill, or interest, any or all, will commend itself to the public; whereas a subject of any intrinsic value (not to push to the opposite extreme), if taught with knowledge, skill, and interest, need offer no other excuse for being, for the results will speak for themselves before that court before which we must all stand for judgment—our students. To meet favorable judgment here our course need not be easy, it may be as solid and serious as any; but above all things it must not be dull, it must not be stupid, it must not mark time. Terence spoke wisdom long ago when he made Geta say: "Nil est quin male narrando possit depravarier"; and the same is true of teaching. So far as its standing in the public mind is concerned, at the last our subject stands or falls with us; we make or break its reputation by our own treatment of it. It is useless to defend it if we ourselves betray it. It is equally needless to defend it by arguments if we glorify it by our teaching. Good wine needs no bush.